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88th plenary meeting
Thursday, 15 March 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/61/709/Add.1 and 2)

The President: I would like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/61/709/Add.1 and Add.2, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/61/709, Chad and Dominica have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in those documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolutions A/61/L.54 and A/61/L.55

The President: The General Assembly has before it today two draft resolutions: A/61/L.54, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations; and A/61/L.55, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda. I would like to thank the entire membership for its constructive approach and the spirit of cooperation and flexibility shown throughout the consultation process. I would also like to thank those delegations that, although they voiced a number of concerns, have worked constructively with me and the facilitators to address those concerns without hindering our ability to adopt the draft resolutions today.

I would particularly like to thank the facilitators — the Permanent Representative of Norway, His Excellency Johan Løvald; the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Prasad Kariyawasam; the Permanent Representative of Portugal, His Excellency João Salgueiro; and the Permanent Representative of Uruguay, His Excellency Elbio Rosselli — for assisting me so effectively in conducting the transparent, inclusive and productive process of consultations that led us successfully to reach a balanced outcome around which we can all rally.

The draft resolution on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations (A/61/L.54) expresses the Assembly's political support and gives procedural guidance from Member States to the Secretary-General. It also provides that the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations referred to in operative paragraph 2 will be decided by the membership through the established procedures of the General Assembly and its intergovernmental, technical, administrative and budgetary subsidiary organs. This will take place after

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the submission by the Secretary-General of the comprehensive report referred to in operative paragraph 3.

As stipulated in the draft resolution, the report should take full account of the views of Member States, in particular the need to take all measures to guarantee the unity of command and the safety and security of all personnel working in the field. The report should also take into account the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including those relating to specific requests by the Assembly, concerning the functioning of the various aspects of peacekeeping operations, among them resolutions 60/266 and 60/268, in order to ensure the effective management of those operations and to establish clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

By adopting the draft resolution on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda (A/61/L.55), the Assembly will allow the Secretary-General to appoint a High Representative at the rank of Under-Secretary-General to head the new Office for Disarmament Affairs. It will provide the Secretary-General with the political support needed for him to discharge his duties in a flexible and effective manner, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

It is my sincerest hope that the Assembly can move now to adopt both draft resolutions without a vote.

I wish to inform members of the following corrections to draft resolution A/61/L.54. The title should read "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations". The ending of paragraph 2 of the same resolution should read "the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint an Under-Secretary-General to head the Department". Those corrections will be reflected in the final version.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/61/L.54 and A/61/L.55.

We turn first to draft resolution A/61/L.54, entitled "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/61/L.54, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 61/256).

The President: We turn next to draft r
A/61/L.55, entitled "Strengthening of the ca
the Organization to advance the disarmament
May I take it that the Assembly decides to
draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/61/L.55 was (resolution 61/257).

The President: Before giving the speakers in explanation of position, may I delegations that explanations of position are l 10 minutes and should be made by delegati their seats.

I now give the floor to those representat wish to speak in explanation of position resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Malmierca Diaz (Cuba): I have th to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned M (NAM). Allow me first of all, Madam, to than convening this meeting. I am confident th your wise and able guidance, our deliberat yield a solid outcome.

Regarding resolution 61/256, I would al congratulate the facilitators — Ambassador Permanent Representative of Norway, and Am Kariyawasam, Permanent Representative Lanka — for their tireless efforts to help us the framework resolution for the restructurin Secretariat in the field of disarmament. With remarkable contributions, we would be now where we are now. As a result, we now con resolution to be balanced and to incorporate the concerns raised by Member States in informal consultations. The Non-Aligned M would also like to commend both facilitator transparency of their consultations. That pro an excellent tribute to the principle of transp the United Nations.

As we have stated in our previous st NAM steadfastly supports the efforts of the S General to improve the management Organization and to strengthen its ability to d programmes effectively. In line with that com NAM believes that the restructuring of the S in the disarmament field will enhance the e and effectiveness of the Office to deliver its m

The Non-Aligned Movement is confident new Office headed by a High Representati

rank of Under-Secretary-General will continue to maintain its budgetary autonomy and the integrity of existing structures and functions of the current Department for Disarmament Affairs. Its status under the direct supervision of the Secretary-General will convey a clear and firm message to the international community on the need for a more focused effort as well as determined leadership at the highest level of the Secretariat to revitalize the disarmament agenda.

With that background in mind, it may be stated that what we have now accomplished is a first major step towards further procedural considerations, as we understand that the restructuring of the Secretariat in the disarmament field will require comprehensive intergovernmental participation. NAM looks forward to consensual support on the framework resolution before us to enable us swiftly to embark on a further undertaking that would contribute to the functioning of the new Office.

Finally, therefore, allow me once again to reiterate NAM's support for the framework resolution on the restructuring of the Secretariat in the disarmament field. We further reaffirm our readiness to continue to participate in that process actively and constructively.

Regarding resolution 61/257, the Non-Aligned Movement would like again to thank the President of the General Assembly for leading the process and appointing the two facilitators — Ambassador João Salgueiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal, and Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay — to coordinate the deliberations of Member States in order to reach broad consensus on the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

NAM strongly support all efforts aimed at improving the Organization's ability to manage peacekeeping operations effectively and efficiently with a view to achieving the key objectives outlined in the reform agenda. The Non-Aligned Movement supports resolution 61/257, which provides guidance for further consideration and decision of the General Assembly, in accordance with established procedures.

NAM continues to stress the need for adherence to the guiding principles of this exercise — the preservation of unity of command in missions at all levels, coherence in policy and strategy, clear command structures in the field and up through to Headquarters, the importance of interaction and coordination with troop-contributing countries, and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel. In that regard, NAM calls upon the Secretary-General to take full account of the views of the Member States, including those expressed in the 2007 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

NAM looks forward to the discussions on the detailed proposal to be submitted by the Secretary-General within the framework of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

In conclusion, NAM would like to reiterate once again its full support for the objectives of the Secretary-General in addressing the challenge of peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Wallace (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Madame President, for your efforts on behalf of the Secretary-General's reorganization plans. We also wish to thank the four facilitators for their hard work and support for the Secretary-General's proposals.

The United States delegation welcomes the General Assembly's adoption of two framework resolutions that support the Secretary-General's proposed reorganization of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In the light of ongoing challenges facing the international community and the clear responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the Charter, the United States endorses the Secretary-General's efforts to manage the United Nations. We share a collective responsibility to support the Secretary-General's managerial prerogatives to reorganize the United Nations to strengthen his capacity to manage and sustain peace and security operations and to bring attention to the disarmament agenda.

The United States has consistently taken the position that the Secretary-General, as chief administrative officer of the United Nations, should have sufficient managerial freedom to act in the best interests of the Organization. At the same time, Member States share both the right and the responsibility to hold the Secretary-General accountable for the outcome of his actions. Our support

for the two resolutions now before us is based on our understanding that the Secretary-General enjoys managerial freedom, as authorized under the Charter of the United Nations, to make the changes he deems appropriate within the Secretariat, provided there is accountability. We welcome your assurance, Madam President, that the framework resolutions preserve the Secretary-General's managerial freedom to act in the best interests of the Organization.

We hope that, in the light of the General Assembly's actions today, the Secretary-General will move forward with his managerial priorities in a manner that corresponds to the needs of the Organization and that respects budgetary discipline and the efficient and effective use of existing resources.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to thank you, Madam President, as well as the facilitators, for your work on the two framework resolutions that we have just adopted. We believe they are a very well balanced reflection of the various positions held by Member States in our recent consultations. The Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption of both resolutions. With those resolutions, we have enabled the Secretary-General to take initial steps in strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda and to carry out its peacekeeping mandates.

On the matter of disarmament, my delegation believes that the establishment of a new office headed by a High Representative, with the increased involvement of the Secretary-General, will generate new momentum towards the achievement of our disarmament and non-proliferation goals. That will help us to overcome the mounting challenges we have faced in recent years.

As for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, we believe that the consolidation of support activities into a unified Department of Field Support is timely recognition of the growing complexity of United Nations field activities. The United Nations is increasingly being called upon to conduct not only peacekeeping but also peacemaking and peacebuilding operations, as well as related humanitarian and development efforts, sometimes all at once in a particular country. Coordinating those activities is crucial to our efforts to make our Organization move efficiently and effectively in maintaining global peace and security.

Once again, my delegation would like to the importance of giving the Secretary-Ge authority and flexibility he needs to ma Secretariat.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanis* delegation of Chile would like to associate it the statement delivered by the P Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Mov Non-Aligned Countries.

Chile welcomes the consensus adoptio resolutions before us. We would like to con you, Madam President — as well as Am Løvald, Ambassador Kariyawasam, Am Salgueiro and Ambassador Rosselli — t successful diplomatic efforts.

We interpret the adoption of the resolut vote of confidence in the Secretary-General that, as we have said several times, he can i his vision of the Secretariat and of how it m out the important mandates we have entrusted

The resolutions adopted today make it we are moving towards a gradual pr implementation, which includes a review pha years' time. Chile would like to express its wi to participate actively in that effort.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our gr the staff members of the Department of Peac Operations and the Department for Disa Affairs for the excellent work they have don We urge them to continue to demonstrate the and spirit of sacrifice in the new phase we are begin.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Rep Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have taken of the statement made by the President with the two resolutions that we have ado afternoon.

Our delegation joined the consensus draft resolution A/61/L.54 in order to demon confidence we have had in Secretary-General moon since the very moment of his ele acclamation by the General Assembly. Our j consensus also constitutes recognition of the have done, Madam President, as well as the w by the facilitators working on your behalf, possible the adoption of a resolution that p guiding framework to make progress as re

intention of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as voiced by the representative of Cuba.

Our delegation would like to emphasize that this initiative — which entails altering the overall structure of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management, as well as the establishment of a new Department of Field Support under the responsibility of an Under-Secretary-General — is subject to the review and approval of the General Assembly. Likewise, we are aware of the importance of the Secretary-General's accountability to Member States in order that we may in time be able to ascertain the effectiveness and relevance of the resolutions that we have just adopted.

Our delegation believes that the resolution reflects the concerns expressed to the Secretary-General and to the facilitators by the majority of delegations regarding retaining universally accepted terminology and a unified command, as well as carrying out a proper administrative process. My delegation awaits with great interest the information that the Secretary-General will continue to provide us to dispel reasonable doubts regarding the coordination mechanism between two departments at the same level as well as between them and the head of mission or special envoy of the Secretary-General: in a word, how to ensure the principle of unified command and effectiveness in implementing mandates.

Our delegation hopes that the comments that have been made by Member States will be addressed in the report to be submitted to us by the Secretary-General and that the evolution of this process should serve as a useful experience at a time when our Organization is moving to strengthen itself and to become more democratic.

Finally, my delegation notes the Secretary-General's success in improving the capacities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which directly affect the security of peoples and have ramifications that also have a direct impact on human lives.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation would like to thank you, Madam, for presenting the two texts we have just adopted as resolutions 61/256 and 61/257. Your skills and your persistence were essential to achieving the consensus adoption of those two resolutions, and we would like to congratulate you and our Secretary-General on that accomplishment.

We would also like to thank our friends the facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Portugal, Uruguay, Norway and Sri Lanka, for their tireless and, at times, thankless task in formulating those two framework resolutions.

Pakistan fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations in all fields — in this instance, to strengthen the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which will now be called the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

On resolution 61/256, we support the statement made by the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Permanent Representative of Cuba. Pakistan understands that the real objective of reform or restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is to rationalize and strengthen it and its capacities at all levels, both in the field and at Headquarters. It is not merely about addressing the problem of managerial overstretch.

We were concerned at the lack of clarity in operative paragraph 2. We were enabled to join the consensus adoption of the resolution in view of the clarifications provided in your introductory statement, Madam, which underline, first, that the restructuring referred to in operative paragraph 2 will be decided by the membership through the established procedures; secondly, that this will take place after the submission of the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General mentioned in operative paragraph 3; and thirdly, that this will take full account of the views of Member States, especially with regard to the unity of command.

In that context, I would like to recall that, in earlier consultations, Pakistan underlined that, if there were to be the creation of a new Department of Field Support, it would be essential in order to maintain the unity of command to consider the appointment of a dedicated Deputy Secretary-General to oversee United Nations peacekeeping. That would also conform to the increased importance and role of peacekeeping in the work of the United Nations.

It is furthermore important in this exercise to strengthen operational capacities at all levels in the

field and at Headquarters, including in the military and police divisions. Pakistan shall raise those issues when the detailed proposal comes up for consideration once the comprehensive report has been submitted.

With regard to resolution 61/257 on the strengthening of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, we associate ourselves with the statement made by the NAM Chair on the adoption of the framework resolution. We trust that the High Representative to be appointed by the Secretary-General will help to fully implement the General Assembly's resolutions, decisions and mandates in the largely unfulfilled disarmament agenda. We hope that the High Representative will develop, as soon as possible, a concrete work plan for the implementation of the agreed objectives of disarmament.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor not to explain my vote, because there is no reason to do so. I simply wish to express my delegation's pleasure that resolutions 61/256 and 61/257 were adopted by consensus. I also take this opportunity to convey our appreciation, Madam, for your efforts to establish all the conditions necessary to ensuring a frank, transparent, open and cordial discussion on the two resolutions. Clearly, those are central themes that are of concern to us and that challenge all United Nations Members.

Let me thank the facilitators, who have played a major role in ensuring that all delegations could participate actively in our deliberations. I should like to thank most sincerely our colleagues from Sri Lanka and Norway and to express all our gratitude to our two colleagues from Portugal and Uruguay for their positive contributions, which very much facilitated our work and contributed to our success today.

With regard to peacekeeping operations, we, as an African country, are very interested in anything that could improve the functioning of this very important Department of the United Nations system. We in Africa are the greatest beneficiaries of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and that is why we strongly supported the Secretary-General's proposals aimed at improving its structure. Such improvement will provide better working conditions for our colleagues in the Department, who have fully contributed and shown exemplary dedication to the implementation of the General Assembly's decisions. Here, I wish to pay tribute to all troop-contributing countries and all those who, in the service of peace, have sacrificed their lives to ensure that the ideals of peace can triumph throughout the world.

If we have supported the Secretary-General's proposals, it is because we believe that they are likely to strengthen the United Nations and equip it with the tools that it needs to shoulder its responsibilities in the area of maintaining international peace and security. In his letter (A/61/749), the Secretary-General clearly explains the reasons behind his thinking, which form the basis for his proposals.

I welcome the fact that today the General Assembly was able to adopt these two resolutions unanimously, by consensus. They will strengthen the United Nations system in the area of disarmament, enabling the Secretary-General to appoint a High Representative who, he has decided, will be in his Cabinet to give greater visibility to this issue. That will ensure that the Secretary-General can closely follow this very important issue, which concerns all of us, small and large, inasmuch as it directly affects international peace and security.

My delegation also welcomes the fact that today, thanks to everyone's efforts, we are in a position to finally give the Secretary-General the tools that he needs to carry out his mission in accordance with the Charter. In particular, however, today we have given ourselves responsibilities in the area of international peace and security. The Secretary-General has reminded us that we are the owners of the United Nations. Today we have demonstrated responsibility. As owners, we cannot only think about dividends; we must also contribute to the efforts necessary to strengthen the United Nations system. I am pleased that that is the case.

I am also pleased that we achieved this through a constructive dialogue among Member States and the Secretariat — the Secretary-General first, but also his colleagues, who came before us one by one to explain in detail the good reasons behind these proposals. I believe that that dialogue will set a precedent in our relations with the Secretary-General. It was an exemplary dialogue, which augurs well for the relations that will now be established between Member States and the Secretary-General.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank the Secretary-General and his colleagues. I take this opportunity once again to pay a well-deserved tribute

to all of the colleagues in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for their dedication to the enormous and fantastic efforts that they are carrying out in the service of peace and of all peoples who are suffering.

As I just indicated, we, as an African country, are the primary beneficiaries of peacekeeping operations. Mindful of that reality, I can tell the Assembly how pleased we are that this resolution could be adopted by consensus. But the main task still lies ahead: giving the Secretary-General our utmost contributions and our full support.

As you yourself said, Madam President, when you sent us the two draft resolutions,

(spoke in English)

> "We need to provide the Secretary-General with strong and unequivocal support in the discharge of his duties."

(spoke in French)

We have done that, and I am glad. We will commit ourselves, working with the Secretariat under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to making our contribution, together with everyone else, in the common interest.

Mr. Hill (Australia): I want to make a few comments on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand (CANZ).

The CANZ countries want to commend the Secretary-General on his efforts to strengthen the Organization, particularly in peacekeeping and disarmament — areas that we regard as critically important. We also want to commend him for his efforts to make progress in a timely fashion. We believe that it is important to get on with the job.

We also thank you, Madam President, for your efforts and those of the facilitators, which have helped to bring us to the point where these two resolutions could be adopted today by consensus.

The CANZ countries are of the mind that the Secretary-General was elected to manage and that it is not in the best interests of the United Nations for Member States to seek to micromanage the Organization. Having said that, we are nevertheless pleased that in the early stages of this process, the Secretary-General took into account our concerns regarding the issue of unity of command.

Our countries look forward to the Secretary-General's appointments pursuant to these framework resolutions and to full consideration of the detailed structural changes in accordance with the usual practices.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): The delegation of Japan welcomes the adoption of the two framework resolutions. Japan also welcomes the Secretary-General's strong commitment to Secretariat reform, including improvement in management.

We support the broad thrust of the Secretary-General's proposals on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to meet the challenges of expanding peacekeeping operations and advancing the disarmament agenda. The adoption by consensus of the two resolutions is a vote of confidence in the Secretary-General in his reform efforts. We encourage him to be bold, or continue to be bold, in his efforts in this regard.

The delegation of Japan is pleased that the consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals took place in an open and transparent manner, particularly in the drafting of these framework resolutions. Japan also thanks the four facilitators — the Permanent Representatives of Norway, Sri Lanka, Portugal and Uruguay — for their tireless efforts in guiding us in the consultation process.

I wish to reiterate Japan's conviction that ensuring budgetary discipline and accountability with regard to the budget, procurement, personnel and reporting lines is of utmost importance. We are also of the view that it is appropriate to consider and make decisions on the financial implications of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as well as of the establishment of the Office for Disarmament Affairs within the context of the whole structure of the Secretariat. In this regard, we appreciate the Secretary-General's commitment that his proposals are to be resource-neutral with respect to the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, and we expect that that commitment will be kept.

At the same time, we wish to state here for the record that it is our understanding that the programme budget outline for the biennium 2008-2009 that is

contained in document 61/254 will be fully respected and should be the basis for the coming deliberations.

Madam President, we share the clarification that you have just made, that paragraph 3 of the peacekeeping operations resolution in document A/61/L.54 takes into account the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the peacekeeping operations management reform. This clarification is very important. We appreciate, Madame President, that you provided clarification clearly at the time of adoption. It is our understanding that the relevant Assembly resolutions include 60/266 and 60/268, which you specifically mentioned in your statement, as well as 60/234 B and 61/246. These four resolutions request the Secretary-General to report on a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the support account, to refine the concept and functioning of integrated missions, to ensure full implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, and to submit a comprehensive report on the management arrangements for procurement, including clear lines of accountability and delegation of authority.

With regard to resolution 61/257, the framework resolution on disarmament, we expect that this reform will serve to advance the disarmament agenda more effectively. At the same time, we wish to make our understanding clear with regard to the wording in paragraph 1 of the disarmament resolution, which refers to "maintaining the budgetary autonomy". This reference does not in any way prejudice the budgetary control and discipline that is ensured by the Comptroller.

We are looking forward to playing a constructive role in the concerted efforts of the Member States, building upon the framework resolutions adopted today.

Mr. Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg (Germany): On behalf of the European Union, I would like to make the following explanatory remark on resolution 61/257, on the Department of Disarmament Affairs (DDA). But first of all, the European Union thanks you, Madam President, and all four facilitators, for the great efforts made to bring about the consensus on the two framework resolutions that we have adopted today.

As for the resolution entitled "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda", we warmly welcome its adoption. It gives the Secretary-General the political start signal to implement his proposal on the realignment of the DDA. The European Union strongly commends the Secretary-General for his personal commitment to take action on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We all feel confident that the reform will help him to better fulfil his function as chief administrative officer of the United Nations, as set out in Article 97 of the Charter, and to perform the functions entrusted to him by all bodies and organs of the Organization in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. The current resolution should not be seen as in any way on impinging on that role or as setting a precedent for future administrative changes in the Secretariat. It is in that spirit that the European Union will participate in the Assembly's consideration of the reports requested from the Secretary-General in the resolution before us.

The European Union welcomes the clarification that the budgetary autonomy, the structures and the functions of the current Department of Disarmament Affairs will be maintained. Therefore, it is our understanding that there should not be any budgetary implication arising from this resolution.

With respect to the High Representative, the European Union reiterates its appreciation for the Secretary-General's choice to maintain the High Representative at the Under-Secretary-General level for establishing a direct line of reporting to the Secretary-General and to make him part of the Secretariat's policy decision-making process. These measures will put the High Representative in a good position to support the Secretary-General in his endeavour to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and will contribute positively to its visibility.

We call on the Secretary-General to name an able and experienced High Representative in a timely manner. Leaving the disarmament and non-proliferation sector in the Secretariat without leadership for a further period would weaken the capacities of the United Nations in this field and send the wrong political signal.

Finally, on behalf of the European Union, I would like to reiterate its full support for the Secretary-General and his reform plans based on his report to the General Assembly in January. We hope to see his reform initiative lead to revitalized United Nations

action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam President, and your facilitators for the work well done in making sure that these two resolutions have been adopted by consensus.

I would like to place on the record our thanks to the Secretary-General for coming out early in his term with these proposals to reform the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. To have succeeded in having these resolutions adopted by consensus is a good omen for the Secretary-General, as it comes very early in his term of office. This house is not an easy one to convince, but that it has been possible to come out with a consensus on these resolutions is a reflection on our part that we wish him well.

Regarding draft resolution A/61/L.54, the Ugandan delegation would like to associate itself with remarks by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. With regard to peacekeeping operations — a very important area — wherever one goes in the world, the presence of blue-helmeted men and women is the face of the United Nations that is known to people. Those men and women have done a good job. Seeking ways and means to strengthen peacekeeping operations is therefore very relevant.

We support splitting the Department of Peacekeeping Operations into two parts, including the establishment of a Department of Field Support. Very often, what happens in the field is not well internalized at Headquarters. There is therefore a need for a unit that pays particular attention to field operations, feeding information to and working closely with Headquarters. It can only make for greater efficiency. We would like to commend the Secretary-General for having come up with that solution.

Uganda, as a troop-contributing country, has a stake in the good operation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. We would like to urge the Secretary-General to speedily provide detailed information regarding the operation of the Department, as restructured by him, so that we can move very quickly to adopt a final resolution that will help to implement his reform agenda.

I would like to thank you once again, Madam, and, through you, the Secretary-General, for the good work done.

Mr. Kebret (Ethiopia): I should like at the outset to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam President, on the manner in which you steered our informal consultations, especially by appointing able facilitators and making our consultations a success. I would also like to express my appreciation to all the facilitators for having handled the difficult consultation process in a very transparent and consistent manner, making sure that all delegations' views and opinions were heard and taken into account in the process.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General. As people say here in America, today is his day.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We joined the general consensus in adopting the two framework resolutions because we strongly believe that the Secretary-General should be given all the support and flexibility that he needs to bring about meaningful change in the two Departments by putting in place effective and efficient structures. We believe that, by doing so, we have given the two Departments a much better chance to have a real impact in achieving the desired objectives in both the disarmament and peace operation fields.

In view of the enhanced activities of United Nations peace operations and the growing demand for greater United Nations involvement in peace and security issues, the need to speed up the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is more urgent than ever. We have all along expressed our views on the issue of restructuring DPKO, and we once again place strong emphasis on the importance of keeping, in principle, unity of command, coherence in policy and strategy, consultations with troop-contributing countries, strengthened operational capacities and the safety of peacekeeping personnel in such realignment exercises. It is our understanding that, as is clearly indicated in operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/61/L.54, the Secretary-General will accord due attention to those essential elements and take the necessary measures accordingly.

There is no doubt that the success of the Secretary-General's reform effort and of the work of our Organization in the areas of peace and security will require the full support and cooperation of all Member States. In this regard, my country will — as it has done to date — remain committed to contributing its own share as a troop-contributing country. That, we believe, is our primordial responsibility as a Member State — to make the work of our Organization as effective and efficient as possible so as to bring about global peace and security.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has just adopted two resolutions dealing with, first, strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda and, secondly, strengthening its capacity in peacekeeping operations.

My delegation believes that the Assembly's actions in this regard are doubly important. First of all, this is the first time since the Secretary-General took office that the General Assembly has taken a stand on a proposal coming from him. Secondly, this is an important moment because the Secretary-General has taken action in an area that touches upon the very essence of our Organization and its raison d'être: the maintenance of peace.

Cameroon, which aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, would like to congratulate you, Madam, and the facilitators for having successfully concluded the consultations that culminated in this consensus. You and the facilitators were indispensable, building bridges between the various schools of thought on these issues, and we express our congratulations.

Cameroon would like to take this opportunity to express its deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General, who, with boldness and wisdom, successfully raised at the very outset of his term of office the issue of the capacity of the Organization to maintain peace and to manage disarmament. His proposals proved extremely useful in our discussions. We therefore believe that the Assembly's adoption, by consensus, of the approach that he proposed sends a message — a message conveying unwavering and renewed confidence in the Secretary-General and his vision for managing the Secretariat in areas that are of the utmost importance for our Organization.

With specific regard to peacekeeping, we should also view the Assembly's consensus adoption of a resolution as a tribute and a source of encouragement to those men and women who work every day with great self-sacrifice to ensure that peace momentarily disrupted is restored, built, maintained and reinforced.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan): Today, we are witnessing an important event, marking the acceptance by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposals on the restructuring of two important Departments: the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his timely initiatives and proposals. They confirm what he promised us upon his unanimous election: transparency and the commencement of the Organization's overhaul. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly, who was innovative and instrumental in enabling us to reach this agreement. The Chairpersons of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77 and China, the facilitators and the regional groups also deserve our commendation.

Theoretical restructuring alone will not attain our objectives. Political will and resilience on the part of Member States are much needed to overcome the hindrances to and the lack of progress towards disarmament, which is one of the top priorities of the United Nations.

While the United Nations peacekeeping efforts, the large budget and the personnel on the ground are all commendable, they are not a source for much jubilation, as they reflect symptoms of disease in view of the many conflicts raging in various corners of the world. That is why we strongly believe that the United Nations should give added momentum to the issue of the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to the implementation of the United Nations economic agenda by tackling their major root causes.

Therefore, the issue of reform — especially reform of the Security Council — should be a continuing process so that dialogue and cooperation, which are the essence of international life, can replace confrontation and increasing militarization.

In conclusion, we wish to thank the Secretary-General. We will be watching for results.

Mr. Mohamed (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting to enable us to adopt these two resolutions. They are part of the process of United Nations reform in two of the most important areas of the Organization's major efforts to maintain international peace and security: disarmament and peacekeeping.

I associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of fraternal Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Reform in these two areas serves to complete the process of United Nations reform by bolstering the Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) adopted by our leaders in September 2005. The outstanding results that we have achieved are due to the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the fact that Sheikha Haya Al-Khalifa supported it, and the consultation efforts of the representatives of Portugal, Uruguay, Sri Lanka and Norway and of the Secretariat. Those efforts, with the participation and cooperation of Member States, led to the adoption of these resolutions by consensus. That should be a source of pride for everyone.

Here, I wish to reiterate my country's position: we fully support all reform initiatives and endeavours to that end. The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly should be very proud because reform is continuing under their leadership, thus serving the interests of the international community. We offer our congratulations and thanks to them.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Allow me to express my sincere gratitude for what we have achieved today. My thanks go first and foremost to you, Madam President, for your personal leadership and commitment in advancing the consultative process.

Let me also thank the able facilitators — Ambassador Løvald of Norway, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Salgueiro of Portugal and Ambassador Rosselli of Uruguay — for their crucial contribution in moving the consultations forward to allow for today's adoption of the two resolutions. And let me thank the membership as a whole for their support, their willingness to listen and their constructive engagement.

The consultative process may have been laborious at times, but I believe that it has benefited us all. I know that we have come to better understand one another and the perspectives that shape our actions and priorities. Today, I see the adoption of these two resolutions as a good beginning to our work together. Now we can embark on a reform initiative with one voice — a collaboration based on mutual trust. Rest assured that I shall continue to consult Member States in a spirit of openness and transparency.

How, then, do we proceed from now on? In your first resolution, you have asked me for a comprehensive report on the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the establishment of a Department of Field Support (DFS). Such a report is to include functional, budgetary, disciplinary and full financial implications, for consideration and a decision by the General Assembly during its sixty-first session, in accordance with established procedures.

You have further called on me to take full account of the views of Member States, including those expressed in the 2007 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — in particular, the need to take all measures to guarantee unity of command and to promote the integration of efforts and strengthen operational capacities, both at Headquarters and in field missions.

Madam President, as I indicated in the annex to my letter to you dated 15 February (A/61/749), I am committed to maintaining unity of command and effort at all levels, here and in the field. By mid-April, I shall submit a comprehensive report that will cover those aspects. It will make clear the number of posts and the structure of units envisaged in both Departments and the reporting lines within and between them. It will further make clear that the DFS will be created by realigning responsibilities and resources from the DPKO Office of Mission Support, as well as from the Department of Management. I am convinced that in that way — together — we will strengthen the capacity of the Organization to manage and sustain peace operations.

On disarmament, I shall submit a report, as requested in resolution 61/257, on the financial, administrative and budgetary implications and on the

implementation of the mandates assigned to the Office for Disarmament Affairs. As I indicated in my letter of 15 February, I am determined, through the work of my High Representative, to revitalize the disarmament agenda.

On the basis of the two resolutions just adopted by the Assembly, I shall proceed with the necessary appointments, in consultation with Member States.

As I said at the outset, I believe today marks a new beginning. The road ahead will not be without its challenges, but I look forward to working hand-in-hand with the Assembly as we advance together. I look with confidence to our collective journey, and I promise, for my part, to make it as free as possible of unnecessary obstacles and detours.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

We have now adopted resolution 61/256, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations, and resolution 61/257, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda.

I was very pleased that throughout the consultations process the membership was united in providing the Secretary-General with the necessary political support so that he can more effectively discharge the responsibilities and duties of his important office. I believe that a strong Secretary-General is an essential component of a stronger and more effective United Nations.

As we prepare to follow up with the consideration of the reports requested in both resolutions, I am hopeful that we will continue to work together, and with the Secretary-General, to strengthen the Organization to better meet the needs of the peoples of the world.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 112.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.